

Week 1 Assignment
EDLD 5366

Impressions of Ancient Manuscripts

My first impression of the Sultan Baybars' Qur'an is the opulence of the construction of the seven volumes of the Qur'an (Koran). All of the lettering is done in gold, which was not customary. The pages show contrast with the gold print and repeating geometric shapes. The gold and colors in the shapes contract dramatically against the plain parchment page. Throughout the seven volumes is the repeating per shaped image which is used as a counting device to show 5th and 10th verses. Repetition also occurs at the beginning of each volume, with an illuminated double page that indicates the volume number and the placement within the set: fourth of seven volumes. Another repetitive design feature is the occurrence of only six lines per page. This is in contrast other manuscripts of the period where an odd number of lines were used. All of the pages appear to be set so the far left and right margins are wider placing the inner margins close together at the spine of the book. On each page the use of the pear shape and gold roundel help the reader know where the reading begins and ends. This Qur'an is an important example of period. It was commissioned and written using the best calligraphers and illuminators (illustrators) available to the Mamlak ruler that commissioned the writing around 1304 AD.